DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 715 SO 023 947

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TITLE Second-Order Learning and Education for Peace: Eva Nordland and the Project "Preparedness for Peace." Peace Education Miniprints No. 54.
INSTITUTION Lund Univ. (Sweden). Malmo School of Education.
REPORT NO ISSN-1101-6418
PUB DATE Dec 93
NOTE 15p.
AVAILABLE FROM Preparedness for Peace R & D Group, School of Education, Box 23501, S-200 45 Malmo, Sweden.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Global Approach; *International Education; International Relations; *Peace; Problem Solving; *Student Attitudes; Teacher Education; War; World Affairs
IDENTIFIERS *Global Education; Norland (Eva); *Peace Education

ABSTRACT

This interview explores the views of Eva Norland, an educational researcher and peace activist. A discussion of peace education examines definitions, school contribution, age levels, teacher training, and instructional approach. Eva Norland offers her opinion on the concept of peace from environmental development, solidarity work, human rights, and disarmament perspectives. Brief background notes and a nine-item list of selected publications of Eva Nordland follow the interview. (CK)

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SECOND-ORDER LEARNING AND EDUCATION FOR PEACE

Eva Nordland
and
The Project "Preparedness for Peace"

The project group "Preparedness for Peace" at the Malmö School of Education in Sweden studies ways of helping children and young people to deal constructively with questions of peace and war. As part of this work, experts with special interest and competence in areas related to peace education are interviewed. This publication explores the views of Eva Nordland, Norway, educational researcher and long-time peace activist. – Interviewer: Åke Bjerstedt.

EDUCATION FOR PEACE: AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR EVA NORDLAND, OSLO

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in fields related to "peace education"?

EN: My name is Eva Nordland. As Professor of Education at Oslo University, I participated in developing a new subject area that we call social pedagogy. It was created in cooperation with students as a protest against traditional pedagogy, which we experienced as being far too cause-and-effect-oriented as well as too competition-oriented. We built up something that was intended to be more geared to the complicated, interrelated community, and where people would learn to function in groups, learn to work on solving problems, use theory as a means of solving problems and practice as a means of reflecting on what they themselves saw. It has worked for 16-17 years now, and we're continuing to expand and refine it. That takes second place in my life in relation to number one, which is to be part of a family: I have a husband and four children.

I can't mention a date when I started to take an interest in peace work. To me, it has long been connected with the concept of democracy. I'm not as interested in how democratic political systems are designed as I am in the values on which they are based – in other words, how they handle equality, solidarity and responsibility. Those are the three key words that I associate with the word "democracy" and that I would like to see as fundamental to how I raise my own children as well as to my pedagogy, my professional life.

When I felt that it was difficult to find room for those ideas in the traditional work as it developed at Oslo University, I applied for a job in Denmark and was offered a chair in psychology in Århus. But then a possibility to arrange parallel studies at Oslo University opened up, and since the family didn't want to move to Denmark I had to quit in Århus and start the activities that were to develop into social pedagogy in Oslo. And I've been working with that for almost 20 years now.

ÅB: Perhaps you could also say something about your current work in the area of peace education?

EN: In the last few years, peace organizations and environmental groups in Norway have begun to cooperate in the Campaign for the Environment and

Development, which comprises 76 organizations. The other thing that has happened in Norway and in the Nordic countries and that is important to me is the creation of the Alternative Future Project. It is most vital in Norway, but it is a Nordic project initiated by 17 organizations. The aim of the project is to work out ideas and models of, and knowledge about, how alternatives to the existing society can be developed. It's interesting that the pillar of the established society, i.e. Parliament, is supporting us in developing an alternative to the established society; we've been receiving approximately NKr 4 million a year.

In the process of that work, the concept of peace has widened considerably, for me and for other people. It comprises environmental development, solidarity work, human rights and, of course, disarmament. The issues of environmental protection are absolutely central. The concept of peace has expanded so as to encompass a totally alternative social development. Part of our work is founded on an analysis of the values relevant to society in the future: social values should be given priority over material and economic development, and great importance is attached to social, human values, i.e. equality and justice in a global context. It's remarkable to see what a high degree of consensus there is about these matters. One tends to think, occasionally, that this is something I personally have developed for myself in my life, and then one discovers that practically everybody involved shares one's views. That gives an inner conviction that we are on our way.

In this kind of work it's important to make room for hope, hope linked to activity. What's stopping us from sitting down and simply describing all those varying and positive things that exist, rather than make statistics of all the terrible and disastrous things? We need that *too*, of course, but it's important that we don't just content ourselves with research documenting misery. I'm involved in a project that we call "Participants", where we try to describe generations as participants in their own shared local environment.

In my peace work it's been important for me, among other things, to establish contacts with the Soviet Union, since it has somehow been described as our "main enemy" for quite some time now. When I took part in the peace march from Stockholm to Minsk, I made friends with many people and felt that we were "of the same kind", had the same hopes, the same convictions, the same morals, which, as a matter of fact, I knew beforehand, since I've had many previous contacts.

On a subsequent occasion, when I was in the Soviet Union to give a lecture at the University of Moscow, the Deputy Minister of the Department of

Education was my hostess, and it turned out that she and I walked hand in hand in the peace march in Moscow in 1982. We became friends, and when I met her again at a women's conference, I suggested that we should initiate parallel research where we would chart and describe the positive things that happened, so that we would be able to meet and share our experiences. Very little red tape was required, since we agreed on making such economic arrangements that the issues of currencies did not present a problem. She had two requests: on the one hand, that our first meeting should take place in Oslo and, on the other, that I should use my contacts in the United States, so that people in the USA would also be involved in our project. It was easy to meet both of those requests, and then we went ahead. The American participants were Betty Reardon and her colleagues at the Teachers College in New York. We developed a close, personal teamwork.

2.

ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?

EN: To me, the most important results of peace education in the schools are the pupils' attitudes and expectations, that which is sometimes called second-order learning. Certain factual knowledge and skills are central to a learning situation; they are the immediate content or "the text". The "context" is those habits, attitudes and expectations that develop gradually as a consequence of the text and the atmosphere you work in. I don't want to call something peace education proper as long as it's just a matter of "text" (learning simple facts about war and peace), but only when the "context" is included. Then I use the term "habits" about that which is least at the focus of attention, that which has turned into automatized, unexamined actions. Attitudes are somewhat more conscious, and expectations even more so.

ÅB: Two terms have been used in the Swedish discussion: "fredsfostran" (nurturing for peace) and "fredsundervisning" (peace instruction). Would you like to comment on those terms?

EN: To me, the term "nurturing for peace" is more oriented towards a wider peace pedagogy input, where the "context" plays a certain role, whereas the term "peace instruction" in its traditional sense is more oriented towards what I call "text". But words change their meanings as you use them, and therefore I don't want us to argue too much about terminology. But I'm not so keen on talking about "nurturing" unless the atmosphere has also been included. You can give peace education in an authoritarian atmosphere, and

you can give it in an atmosphere where the element of competition takes priority; but under those circumstances it's not "nurturing" in my sense of the word. But, as I already said, it all depends on how you choose to define your terms, so definitions are more important than the words themselves.

3.

ÅB: If you think back of your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?

EN: I spent my first years at school at a very old-fashioned school in Nordvästlandet. We went to school every second day, and it was our progress in mathematics that determined what grade we were placed in. The most prominent characteristic of our history instruction, as I remember it, was teaching us not to like Danes. That was clearly a non-peaceful element, and I suppose there wasn't much worth calling peace education at that school, even though the school and the area around it were characterized by friendly relations among various local groups.

Later on, things changed. I was a young girl when the war started, and then we got very much involved in discussing democracy. To me, Fascism and Nazism represented the strong despising the weak, which implied that democracy meant respecting weakness and defending the rights of the weak. We saw with our own eyes the conflict between brutal Nazism and a philosophy of life that champions concern for everybody. School had a role to play in that discussion. For example, we had an English teacher who actually taught us politics. As a matter of fact, three of my teachers were killed fighting against the German troops, so we had perspicuous lessons quite close to us.

4.

AB: Do you believe that schools in your country, as you know them today, contribute to a "peace education"?

EN: Yes, very much so. Naturally there isn't a very even distribution, and I can't give any percentages. But today many teachers at many schools have a positive attitude to addressing issues of peace in a wide sense. And as far as the environment and development are concerned, we can almost talk about consensus. Here a lot of things have happened during the last five years, maybe especially after the Brundtland Report was published, because now it has become acceptable to take an interest in those questions. In the 70s, people were more concerned about their own position and tended to choose

to take "international understanding", the phrase of the school law, as their starting-point.

At a fairly early stage of my adult life I worked as an adviser to the Ministry of Education, developing texts that might be useful for teachers in their work. The United Nations organization has done a lot to produce materials that were not too controversial. As a NATO country, Norway has, of course, been very sensitive to criticism from the US. Teaching materials were not allowed to contain anything at all that implied a criticism of NATO, especially not anything that ran counter to the military defence. We only reached a certain consensus when guidelines were issued to the effect that the military defence should also be dealt with.

What I myself have been especially involved in as a researcher is the evaluation of the Norwegian ASPRO schools. Students majoring in social pedagogy (and I, as their teacher) travelled around, collected material, conducted interviews and wrote a report on their work. I have been quite impressed by some of the work Norwegian teachers have devoted to these UNESCO-inspired activities. They provide a varied picture of the possibilities of creating peace-oriented work at school.

ÅB: What was the scope of those activities?

EN: They accepted 20 schools, one of the conditions being that the schools should have a special contact with either a local education office or a school of education so as not to burden the small UNESCO office with the administrative responsibility. They meet once a year to share their experiences and to inspire each other, but otherwise it's quite decentralized. The individual school itself (or part of it) is responsible.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures to be taken that you think of first?

EN: Yes. If it is to be genuine education for peace, it's important that the pupils themselves start by solving problems and are allowed to choose for themselves what problems should be dealt with. For the habits, attitudes and expectations that are built up around this area are to become part of their own personality. Therefore they shouldn't just hear about peace work, it shouldn't just be a text without a context. They must take responsibility themselves, have an opportunity to show concern themselves, and to participate themselves, together with the other pupils.

There are plenty of opportunities for such work in Norwegian schools. Our curricula present no obstacles, and a great deal is actually being done. But in order to reinforce this work, it may be necessary to show what other people are doing, give new groups of teachers a chance to see what is going on, so that they realize that there is so much variation that they don't have to do things the way everybody else does them, but that they can take their own situation as a starting-point: What would suit us? What can we do? In that way the process is initiated, and the reward is in the activities themselves: you experience the happiness of being involved in doing things that are headed in the right direction. The teachers may need the support of their senior officials or administrators at the beginning to see whether they can be of any assistance to them in some practical matters.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?

EN: To me, it's not so much a matter of fundamental differences as what type of projects and problems you choose. Since I attach such great importance to the pupils choosing for themselves, in a way that also takes care of itself. I see essentially the same thing happening in my groups of students of social pedagogy and in junior-level groups at the Norwegian ASPRO schools: when the pupils choose problems that they are absorbed in, knowledge and skills are acquired as a result of solving those problems.

ÅB: Has there been a discussion in Norway as well of the potential risks of involving children who are too young in certain types of peace education?

EN: Yes, there has, but it's not very relevant if you consider my view of what peace education should involve. The first time a child caresses your cheek, it is somehow an active manifestation of peace, it has something to do with care and cooperation. To me it's self-evident that we should start as early as possible to inculcate habits, attitudes and expectations, but it is done concurrently with a development that's going to take place no matter what.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject in which you are particular familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?

EN: Pedagogy, which is the subject I've been teaching, is not very relevant at upper secondary school. But I can mention one method that I like to use and

that should be applicable to many various contexts. Sometimes, when I have beginners in pedagogy and I think they should get to know each other, I give them as their first assignment to talk about themselves as five-year-olds. At first some of them can't remember anything, but then they often come up with fantastic little stories that we can use to illustrate problems of general interest. This method, then, involves reflecting on your own customs, your own experience and comparing that with the experiences of other people. Those who have more experience have a greater responsibility when it comes to contributing new elements to communication. The main responsibility of the teacher is to expand the students' awareness of the problem and help them to see the principles of the individual details.

8.

ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc.). Do you have any comments or preferences as to this terminology ?

EN: I can't really say that I have any preference, since all those terms remind me of important aspects of the wider concept of peace. When we discuss one of those individual aspects, we should also keep all the other, related ones in mind, not because we should immediately jump over to those other elements but because we should be aware that we haven't got very far, that there are many other issues to deal with. When you have been working with the issues of development for a while, you address the issues of disarmament, and that's when you begin to discern the connection between development and disarmament, thus adding another incredibly important dimension to your peace work.

ÅB: Which term do you yourself prefer to use?

EN: It varies, depending on which group I'm working with. Sometimes the term "international education" is the best one when you want to establish contact. In other contexts it may be better to have "the environment and development" as your starting-point. I use the terms alternately, depending on what I know about my listeners and what I want to achieve in communicating with them.

9.

ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with

parents and other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?

EN: Since peace education was regarded with suspicion in Norway in the 70s, other terms, for example "international education", were often used in those days, for nobody could object to that, especially since it is mentioned in the Norwegian school law. Questioning the national military defence and our membership in NATO was a particularly delicate matter.

If anyone had asked me in 1949 whether I wanted to vote for NATO, I would have said no, because then I was in favour of a Nordic community. But it wouldn't occur to me to bring up that discussion now, because that would mean losing lots of opportunities for communication. In Norway today, over 70% are firmly against the use of nuclear weapons of any kind, but at the same time there are 70% who are enthusiastic supporters of a Norwegian membership in NATO. This is of course a contradiction since NATO has its first-employment doctrine which must be considered to run counter to our attitude to nuclear weapons. Here we have had loyal media who have vindicated the national policy so forcefully that these issues are never brought to the attention of large groups of the general public in Norway.

When you introduce peace education, you should choose those designations that can be accepted by parents, since the important thing is to initiate a process, a process of growth. Certain terms tend to create consensus more easily, giving us an opportunity to speak to and influence each other.

10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

EN: Here I can give a brief answer. Bring up the wide concept of peace with the trainee teachers in the way I mentioned in connection with the pupils, so that the future teachers can get involved in the same process.

ÅB: To what extent does this take place at present in the training and in-service training of teachers in Norway?

EN: Many schools of education are involved in these activities, and many teachers at schools of education are doing a very good job. But of course there could be more of them, and more could be done. There is a similar situation in the in-service training: a great deal is done, but considerably more could be done. The authorities should provide the incentives for more ac-

tivities in this area.

11.

ÅB: In many schools, the students represent a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. To what extent would it be possible to use this fact as an aid in education for peace? Would you expect some difficulties in doing so?

EN: There are obvious difficulties, but I would rather attach importance to the possibilities that do exist and that I've seen so many examples of. The cultural minorities at school give us a special opportunity to address important matters in our peace work. They are a resource. But I do realize that there can be occasional problems, especially if you're not aware of how little training Norwegian children have in tackling cultural differences and conflicts.

12.

ÅB: Sometimes the term "global survival" is used to refer to an area dealing both with the risks of nuclear war and with the risks of far-reaching environmental damage through pollution and overuse of resources. How do you look upon dealing with these two categories of risks together in school? Do you have any suggestions as to how the teacher could approach the problem area of environmental damage?

EN: Yes, to me it's quite natural to consider and work with these risks in one context, especially after I studied communication theory, since they are parts of a related system. We have ended up in a vicious circle in our way of looking at ourselves and at others, a way which is characterized by the industrialized countries' arrogant exploitation of advanced technology. Technology implies the ruthless exploitation and exhaustion of areas where people live in poverty, and since they are poor, they themselves are compelled to exploit their area. This leads to hatred and conflicts, which, in turn, increase the risk of armament and war. We have a crisis dynamics where the threat of war and nuclear weapons provides some of the dynamics of the ecological crisis we are experiencing. All these problems should be seen in one context. We must find our way out of this vicious circle and start a new circle, departing from "technology as if people matter", to paraphrase Schumacher, and departing from justice, equality, care, cooperation, democracy and peace.

We also have a "peace dynamics", a type of communication where the

small components have an impact on the larger ones and where we do harm if we keep quiet. If we don't make demands, we are accomplices in the on-going deterioration.

But as educationalists, we must also link our awareness of these problems with hope; otherwise we'll just deprive people of their energy and make them resort to escape mechanisms. These are major important assignments for all of us.

Note: This interview was carried out in the natural Scandinavian way, with questions in Swedish and answers in Norwegian. Then it was translated into English.

Brief Notes on the Interviewee

Eva Nordland, born 1921 in Norway. Address: Institute of Educational Research, Oslo University, P.O. Box 1092, Blindern, N-0317, Oslo 3, Norway.

Eva Nordland has been Professor of Education at Oslo University (from 1985). In 1971-72 she was Professor of Psychology at Århus University, Denmark.

Eva Nordland has had a number of official assignments, among other things serving as Chairperson of the national Kringkastingsrådet [Norwegian Broadcasting System Advisory Council] 1955-60, of Laererutdanningsrådet [Teacher Education Council] 1960-69, of Freds- og Konfliktsforskningsrådet [Peace and Conflict Research Council] 1966-68, of Immatrikuleringskomiteen [Matriculation Committee] (for Norwegian universities) 1969-70 and Ungdomsvalget [Coordinating Committee for Youth Organizations] 1972-76. She has also served on the Council of Europe as Scandinavian representative for educational issues.

During the 1970s and 80s, Eva Nordland was involved in the development of the subject area of social pedagogy at Oslo University.

She has both participated in, and taken the initiative for, a number of peace activities, including the peace marches from Copenhagen to Paris (1981), from Stockholm to Moscow and Minsk (1982), and from New York to Washington (1983), as well as the Nordic campaign for establishing the Nordic countries as a nuclear weapon-free zone (1984-5).

Eva Nordland has been director of Norges Fredslag [Norwegian Peace Association] (founded in 1884) and of the board of Kornhaug Norsk Freds-

senter [Kornhaug Norwegian Peace Center]. She is one of the founders of Stiftelsen Fred [Peace Foundation], Kvinner for Fred [Women for Peace] in Norway and Nei til Nye Atomvåpen [No to New Nuclear Weapons], later Nei til Atomvåpen [No to Nuclear Weapons].

Selected Publications

Eva Nordland received her PhD from Oslo University, the title of her dissertation being Sammenheng mellom sosial atferd og oppdragelse [The Connection between Social Behavior and Upbringing]. She has studied the Swedish school reforms around 1950 and published the book Verdier i gammel og ny skole [Values in the School of Yesteryear and Today] (Oslo 1958). Some of her other books are Tema for en ny tid [Themes for a New Era] (Oslo 1954); Det store nederlaget [The Great Defeat] (Oslo 1971); Ungdoms holdninger i det teknologiske samfunn [Adolescent Attitudes in the Technological Society] (Oslo 1974); Fredsrøtter [The Roots of Peace] (with Tulle Elster, Oslo 1982); Fremtid for vår jord [A Future for Our Planet] (Oslo 1983); Socialpedagogikk [Social Pedagogy] (Oslo 1985); Miljøpedagogikk [Environmental Education] (Oslo 1986).

Eva Nordland has also published many articles on issues involving peace, schools and other social matters.

"Peace Education Miniprints" are published and distributed by the R&D Group "Preparedness for Peace" (address: School of Education, Box 23501, S-200 45 Malmö, Sweden).

At present "Peace Education Miniprints" will also function as aids in the networking activities of PEC/IPRA (the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association).

ISSN 1101-6418